

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6939

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCSO

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS VE

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF LOAN OF CODESUR AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 268794

SECDEF PLEAS PASS TO DEPARTMENT OF ARMY AND DEFENSE MAPPING AGENCY

1. I CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND STRONGLY THE RETENTION OF THE THREE UH-1 HELICOPTERS AND THE U-1A FIXED WING AIRCRAFT IN THE CODESUR PROGRAM. INDEED, I SUGGEST THAT THE U.S. MAKE AN OUTRIGHT GRANT OF THESE AIRCRAFT TO THE GOV.

2. I WILL NOT REITERATE MY REASONS FOR THIS RECOMMENDATION, WHICH WERE FULLY OUTLINED IN CARACAS 2056, EXCEPT TO ADD THE OBSERVATION THAT GRANTING THESE AIRCRAFT WOULD BE ECONOMICAL AS WELL AS POLITICALLY ADVISABLE. THE REFERENCED TELEGRAM NOTED U.S. CONCERN OVER CONTINUED LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR THESE AIRCRAFT. IF WE DONATE THESE PLANES TO THE GOV, WE WOULD ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH U.S. SUPPORT AND PERMIT THE REASSIGNMENT TO OTHER DUTIES OF THE PRESENT TWO U.S. MILITARY MAINTENANCE ADVISORS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CONTINUED LOAN OF THE HELICOPTERS, WITH SUPPORTING MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, WOULD NOT BE COST-EFFECTIVE, SINCE THE PROGRAM NECESSITATING THESE HELICOPERS WILL CONTINUE FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER FIVE YEARS.

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2. IN CONNECTION WITH THE SALE OF THE FIXED WING U-1A, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT CODESUR WOULD BE ABLE TO SECURE FUNDS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO OR MORE YEARS FOR PURCHASE OF THIS AIRCRAFT. CODESUR WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE THE CAPABILITY AND SHOULD HAVE AN ADEQUATE CURRENT BUDGET TO MAINTAIN THE AIRCRAFT AND PURCHASE SPARE PARTS FOR BOTH IT AND THE HELICOPTERS. SINCE IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT CODESUR WILL BE ABLE TO BUY THIS AIRCRAFT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IF AT ALL, THE COSTS TO THE U.S. OF RETURNING THIS AIRCRAFT AND SPARE PARTS TO THE U.S. AND MAINTAINING IT THERE WOULD BE AVOIDED BY A DIRECT GRANT.

4. THESE AIRCRAFT ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR EXPEDITING THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAPPING PROGRAMS OF VENEZUELA, IN BOTH OF WHICH THE U.S. SHARES IMPORTANT INTERESTS. IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUS COST SAVINGS AND POLITICAL BENEFITS WHICH WOULD ACCRUE THROUGH THE DONATION OF THE AIRCRAFT, I RECOMMEND THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO GRANT THESE AIRCRAFT TO THE GOV.

5. APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS MAY WISH TO CONSULT WITH VICE ADMIRAL CRAMER, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE MAPPING AGENCY, WITH WHOM I DISCUSSED MY VIEWS CONCERNING THESE AIRCRAFT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO VENEZUELA.

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